United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, expresses concern at disorder and civilian suffering in Western Georgia; cites threat to humanitarian situation in Azerbaijan and Armenia; welcomes improvement in security of railroads following Russian assistance.

+ Samir Sanbar to replace Marco Vianello-Chiodo as Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information from 17 January 1994; transfer of responsibilities to begin tomorrow.

+ Staff and functions of Internal Audit Division, Management Advisory Services, Central Evaluation Unit and Central Monitoring Unit to be redeployed from Department of Administration and Management to Office of Inspections and Investigations.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs urges Member States to contribute to humanitarian relief programme in Angola; notes serious shortfall in May appeal, especially in non-food sector.

+ Committee against Torture begins eleventh session in Geneva; to review measures taken by eight States to prevent and punish torture and consider report on World Conference on Human Rights.

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The Security Council this afternoon expressed anxiety and concern at developments in Western Georgia, where continuing disorder has caused mass suffering among the civilian population and threatened to seriously aggravate the humanitarian situation in neighbouring Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In a statement read out by its President, Jose Luis Jésus (Cape Verde), the Council noted the Georgian Government's appeal to the Russia Federation, Azerbaijan and Armeina for assistance to protect and ensure the uniterrupted operation of railroads in the Republic of Georgia. The Council said those communication links were crucial for the three Transcaucasian countries, and welcomed the improvement in security following the Russian response, which had been made in accordance with the Georgian Government's wishes.

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The Council appealed to the international community to continue its efforts to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the population of Georgia.

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The Secretary-General has decided that Samir Sanbar, previously his Special Representative for the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER), will replace Marco Vianello-Chiodo as Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information with effect from 17 January 1994. Announcing the appointment today, a United Nations spokesman said Mr. Vianello-Chiodo had informed the Secretary-General that he wanted to leave his post on that date.

Mr. Sanbar, who was the Director of the Information Centres Division of the Department of Public Information (DPI) until January of this year, will become Officer-in-Charge of DPI as of tomorrow. He will immediately begin to take over responsibilities from Mr. Vianello-Chiodo, who, until his departure in January, will remain available to the Secretary-General for special assignments.

The Office of the Spokesman, previously part of DPI, is to become part of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General with immediate effect. It will report through Alvaro de Soto, Senior Political Advisor in the Secretary-General's Executive Office, who will assume new responsibilities for relations with the media.

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The staff and other resources of the Internal Audit Division, Management Advisory Services, Central Evaluation Unit and Central Monitoring Unit, which are currently within the Department of Administration and Management, are to be redeployed to the Office of Inspections and Investigations, according to a United Nations spokesman. The functions now being carried out by those units will be transferred to the Office for Inspections and Investigations, which was created by the Secretary-General in August to inspect all activities performed by the Organization.

Mohamed Niazi, Assistant Secretary-General for Inspection and Investigations, will work closely with Melissa Wells, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, according to the spokesman. A report on the redistribution of functions and resources between the Department of Administration and Management and the Office of Inspections and Investigations will be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session.

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Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, today sent a letter to Member States appealing urgently for contributions to the humanitarian relief programme in Angola, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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While access to the areas of greatest need in Angola had improved significantly in recent weeks, the humanitarian appeal launched in May remained seriously underfunded, the spokesman said. So far, only $60.5 million out of the required $226 million has been forthcoming. The situation was especially acute in the non-food sector, where less than 15 per cent of the funds required had been pledged.

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The Committee against Torture, a body comprising 10 independent experts, began its eleventh session in Geneva today. During the session, which will end on 19 November, the Committee will review the measures taken by Belize, Peru, Paraguay, Poland, Egypt, Ecuador, Portugal and Cyprus to prevent and punish acts of torture. Representatives of those States are expected to present reports on how they apply the rights and guarantees enshrined in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Committee will also examine any evidence that torture is being systematically practised in a State party to the Convention, as well as communications from individuals claiming to be victims of a violation by a State party. In addition, the Committee will consider a report on last June's World Conference on Human Rights, and will have before it the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Conference.

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